

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6850

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MILI, LE

SUBJECT: VIEWS OF YOUNGER MODERATE SUNNI LEADERSHIP ON FUTURE  
OF LEBANON

1. SUMMARY: RELATIVELY YOUNG SUNNI LEADER DR. NAJIB QARANOUH, DESCRIBES "ISLAMIC GROUP" AND "NATIONAL UNITY FRONT" AS TWO MANIFESTATIONS OF SAME EFFORT TO DEVELOP LEBANESE CHRISTIAN-MOSLEM RECONCILIATION. MOSLEMS CAN DEAL WITH PIERRE GEMAYEL, BUT BELIEVE CAMILLE CHAMOUN IS ENEMY OF RECONCILIATION. JUNBLATT IS NOT RADICAL, MERELY WANTS FAIR SHARE OF PARTICIPATION IN LEBANESE POLITICAL PROCESS. REAL PROBLEM IN LEBANON IS PALESTINIAN STATUS, WHICH CAN ONLY BE SOLVED IN CONTEXT OF MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. ARAB LEAGUE MEDIATION HAS CHANCE TO SUCCEED. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF MET AUGUST 4 WITH NAJIB QARANOUH, MEDICAL DOCTOR WHO IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH MODERATE MOSLEM LEADERSHIP IN WEST BEIRUT, AND

WIDELY RESPECTED AS REPRESENTING YOUNGER EDUCATED SUNNI GENERATION.

3. ISLAMIC GROUP AND NATIONAL UNITY FRONT.

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QARANOUH SAID PROGRAM AND PERSONALITIES OF ISLAMIC

GROUP AND NATIONAL UNITY FRONT CONSIDERABLY OVERLAPPED, AND WITH A PURPOSE. FRONT WAS HARD-HITTING ORGANIZATION WITH FEW BUT FIRM DEMANDS (E.G. COMPLETE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL), WHEREAS ISLAMIC GROUP WAS FLEXIBLE ON ISSUES, MORE SUITED TO DISCUSSING WITH OTHER PARTIES, BETTER ABLE TO FIND COMPROMISES.

4. KFOUR FRONT. QARANOUH REGARDS CAMILLE CHAMOUN AS IMPLACABLE OPPONENT OF YEAL LEBANESE-LEBANESE RECONCILIATION. CHAMOUN DOMINATES FRANGIE, WHO HAS DISPLAYED REMARKABLE POLITICAL INCOMPETENCE. PIERRE GEMAYEL, ON OTHER HAND, IS HONORABLE AND REASONABLE MAN WITH WHOM MOSLEMS COULD DEAL. GEMAYEL IS TRULY DEVOTED TO LEBANESE NATIONAL INTEGRITY.

5. JUNBLATT. QARANOUH SAID HE HAD KNOWN JUNBLATT INTIMATELY FOR MANY YEARS. WHAT JUNBLATT REALLY WANTS IS REASONABLY FAIR POLITICAL SYSTEM, NOT ONE IN WHICH MARONITES PERMANENTLY HOLD DOMINANT POSITION, BUT ONE IN WHICH ALL LEBANESE CAN COMPETE ON BASIS OF ABILITIES RATHER THAN SECTARIAN AFFILIATION.

6. PALESTINIAN QUESTION. QARANOUH BELIEVES ABSOLUTELY THAT ONLY WAY OUT OF LEBANESE CRISIS IS TO FIND PALESTINIAN SOLUTION IN BROADER MIDDLE EAST CONTEXT. THIS VIEW IS SHARED BY ALL LEBANESE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP. IN AUGUST 1975, HE SAID, KARAME, HAD TOLD GROUP OF LEBANESE THAT U.S. AND USSR WERE AGREED ON ESTABLISHMENT OF WEST BANK PALESTINIAN STATE, AND THAT THEY HAD ALL PINNED THEIR HOPES ON THIS. WHAT IS NEEDED, HE SAID, IS IMMEDIATE SOLUTION TO BROADER PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IF PEACE IS TO COME TO LEBANON.

7. ARAB LEAGUE MEDIATION. QARANOUH BELIEVES THAT THIS WILL BE DECISIVE WEEK IN HISTORY OF LEBANESE CIVIL WAR. THERE IS CHANCE THAT CURRENT SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN AGREEMENT AS WELL AS LOCALLY ARRNGED

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ARAB LEAGUE CEASEFIRE WILL WORK. IF NOT, WAR WILL CERTAINLY TAKE TURN FOR THE WORSE. HE ADMIRES ARAB LEAGUE REPRESENTATIVE HASSAN SABRI KHOLI AS VERY ASTUTE, KNOWLEDGEABLE NEGOTIATOR.

8. COMMENT: QARANOUH IS VERY LEVEL-HEADED, PERCEPTIVE MAN ON LEBANESE POLITICAL FRONT HE SAID

HE HAD BEEN OFFERED CABINET POSITIONS A NUMBER OF  
TIMES BUT TURNED THEM DOWN BECAUSE HE KNOWS HE  
WOULD BE POWERLESS TO OPERATE SINCE HE IS WITHOUT  
PERSONAL POLITICAL BACKING. HE PREFERS TO ASSIST  
POLITICAL PROCESS BY CONTRIBUTING TO UNDERLYING  
INTELLECTUAL DEBATE.  
HUNT

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